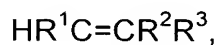


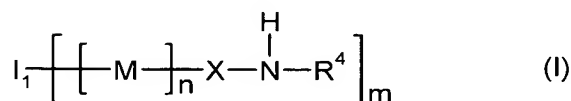
The invention is directed to a process entailing first preparing a mixture that includes

(i) at least one monoethylenically unsaturated monomer conforming to



(ii) at least one oxidizing agent, and

(iii) a compound containing a hindered secondary amine conforming to formula (I)



wherein M conforms to $\text{HR}^1\text{C}=\text{CR}^2\text{R}^3$, m is 1 to 50, n is 1 to 300, I_1 is an initiator, and R^4 and X independently represent secondary or tertiary carbon atoms selected from defined groups, and then heating the mixture to a temperature of 0 to 220°C.

The inventive process yields products of controlled molecular weight and molecular structure.

Key to the present invention is the use of the compound of formula (I) that is being oxidized in situ in the course of the process. It has surprisingly been found that the inventive process yields surprising and unexpected results, in terms of conversion and molecular weight.

Attention is respectfully called to Example 2 (page 20) that describes the invention using the amine of formula (I) and an oxidizing agent and to "comparative Example B" (page 22) that describes a corresponding process where TEMPO, the oxidized form of 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine is used.

The table below is an extract of the data presented in the application relative to these examples.

Example	Time (hours)	Conversion (%)	M _n	M _w
2	2.33	89.5	53,460	78,310
B(comp.)	24	55.1	9,400	13,140

The tabulated results show the greater efficacy of the inventive process in terms of conversion and molecular weight than does a corresponding process using TEMPO.

The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kazmaier et al U.S. Patent 6,320,007.

Kazmaier disclosed a corresponding process and names TEMPO among the preferred free radical agents.

The results discussed above point to the surprising and unexpected results that characterize the claimed process, the results attributable to the in situ oxidation of the compound of formula (I). Nothing in Kazmaier describes or suggests these results.

The rejection alleging obviousness under section 103 is believed addressed and overcome by the above.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over Claims 1-3 of U.S. Patent 6,686,424.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C.103 (a) as being obvious over U.S. patent 6,686,424.

The currently filed terminal disclaimer is believed addressing and overcoming these rejections.

Believing the above represent a complete response to the Office Action and that the application is in condition for allowance, applicants request the earliest issuance of an indication to this effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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